Grantee Information

ID	1453
Grantee Name	WNMU-FM
City	Marquette
State	MI
Licensee Type	University

6.1 Telling Public Radio's Story

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The purpose of this section is to give you an opportunity to tell us and your community about the activities you have engaged in to address community needs by outlining key services provided, and the local value and impact of those services. Please report on activities that occured in Fiscal Year 2024. Responses may be shared with Congress or the public. Grantees are required to post a copy of this report (Section 6 only) to their website no later than ten (10) days after the submission of the report to CPB. CPB recommends placing the report in an "About" or similar section on your website. This section had previously been optional. Response to this section of the SAS is now mandatory.

Joint licensee Grantees that have filed a 2024 Local Content and Services Report as part of meeting the requirement for TV CSG funding may state they have done so in the corresponding questions below, so long as all of the questions below were addressed as they relate to radio operations in such report. You must include the date the report was submitted to CPB along with the TV Grantee ID under which it was submitted.

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1. Describe your overall goals and approach to address identified community issues, needs, and interests through your station's vital local services, such as multiplatform long and short-form content, digital and in-person engagement, education services, community information, partnership support, and other activities, and audiences you reached or new audiences you engaged.

WNMU-FM strives to address community needs and interests through a multi-faceted approach, leveraging our diverse services and platforms. Our core strategy involves producing and delivering relevant content, fostering engagement, providing educational resources, disseminating critical information, and supporting community partnerships. WNMU-FM places a priority on community, civic engagement, and connection. The station presents diverse subject matter and viewpoints, and is ever mindful of creating content for the underserved rural areas of Michigan's Upper Peninsula. Our commitment to informing the community is exemplified by "Media Meet," a news and public affairs interview program co-produced with WNMU-TV. This program provides in-depth exploration of topics relevant to our region. For example, during the fall of 2024, "Media Meet" featured numerous reports and interviews with political candidates, including a debate for a key regional race. WNMU-FM is committed to multicultural programming. In FY24, we incorporated programs celebrating various cultural observances, including Chanukah, Passover, Black History Month, Women's History Month, Hispanic Heritage Month, National Poetry Month, Veteran's Day, and Native American History Month. We regularly feature programs like "National Native News," "Anishinaabe Radio News," "Putumayo World Music," "The Brazilian Hour," "Thistle and Shamrock," "High Country Celtic Radio," "Fiesta!," and "Concierto!," and incorporate world music in national languages into our locally produced "Classiclectic" and "Weekday" programs. As a locally operated station, WNMU-FM prioritizes serving the unique needs of our rural audience. We showcase regional talent through productions like "In the Pines," featuring folk and traditional music from the Hiawatha Traditional Music Festival (now in its 45th year), and coverage of the Porcupine Mountain Music Festival. Kurt Hauswirth produces arts and culture interviews for "Classiclectic" and "The Shuffle," which focuses on new and emerging artists, both regional and national. Our "Weekday" program regularly features emerging artists from around the world, including international musicians who have performed live on the program. Other local productions include "Learning Through the Seasons" (produced in partnership with Grandparents Teach Too), highlights from the Marquette Area Blues Festival, and "Peninsula Performances," showcasing classical music from regional orchestras and ensembles (a series that has aired for over 17 years). "The Shuffle," hosted by Kurt Hauswirth, aims to connect with a younger audience by highlighting new music, independent releases, local artists, national artists, and music discussions. The program features "The Local Spin" segment, focusing on the Upper Great Lakes region's music scene. WNMU also airs "The Great Lakes Odyssey Radio Hour," a regional show featuring music and cultural interviews from across the Upper Peninsula, Northern Lower Michigan, Minnesota, and Canada. "The Children's Hour," a program for and with children, explores diverse themes through interviews, storytelling, poetry, music, and discussions. It features young performers and thinkers, as well as adult experts, providing unique educational content for rural families. WNMU added a new feature that airs twice weekly and is produced in conjunction with the NMU Archives called The U.P. History Moment. This segment features a unique piece of Upper Peninsula culture from our past and includes stories about people, towns, and events that made an impact on our culture. WNMU-FM engages listeners through various participatory programs. Our annual "Holiday Readings and Remembrances" program features listener-submitted holiday memories. During National Poetry Month, we showcase listener-recorded original poetry. We also broadcast special events like the Michigan Humanities' "Bridging Michigan: Building Understanding Through Poetry." Our annual "Veterans' Reflections" program, now in its 14th year, features local veterans sharing their military experiences. To better understand listener needs, WNMU-FM has implemented an online listener survey, designed to facilitate ongoing dialogue and gather feedback from listeners. A "voice-memo" option on our website provides an additional channel for public engagement. WNMU actively engages with the community through outreach activities. We host a community table at the Marquette Farmer's Market, distributing children's books, plant seeds, and other materials to promote childhood learning. This also provides opportunities for direct interaction with station management. WNMU maintains an open-door policy, welcoming community members for tours and discussions. We frequently host group tours, explaining public media operations and emphasizing our community and educational mission.

2. Describe key initiatives and the variety of partners with whom you collaborated, including other public media outlets, community nonprofits, government agencies, educational institutions, the business community, teachers and parents, etc. This will illustrate the many ways you're connected across the community and engaged with other important organizations in the area.

WNMU-FM fosters strong community connections through a variety of collaborative initiatives. We maintain ongoing partnerships with numerous organizations, spanning arts, education, community development, and public media. Our commitment to the arts is evident in our monthly interviews with representatives from leading arts organizations across the region, including the Calumet Theatre, Bonifas Art Museum, Crystal Theatre, Historic Vista Theatre, Northern Michigan University (NMU) Theatre and Music Departments, and Beaumier Heritage Center. These interviews, highlighting upcoming virtual and in-person events, are available on WNMUFM.org. Since 2016, WNMU-FM has partnered with Northern Michigan University's Center for Native American Studies to produce "Anishinaabe Radio News," hosted by NMU Professor April Lindala. This weekly two-minute program, airing during "Morning Edition" and "All Things Considered," explores Native American history and culture, providing updates on Indigenous events at NMU and across the Great Lakes Region. Podcasts of the program are also available online. WNMU-FM is dedicated to providing hands-on learning opportunities for high school and NMU students through station internships. In FY24, WNMU-FM hosted an NMU student intern, providing training in public broadcasting, editing, recording, live on-air operations, and broadcast standards and ethics. We also support career awareness activities in local area elementary and secondary schools. News Director Nicole Walton recently conducted outreach at a local high schools and middle schools, demonstrating newsgathering equipment and discussing career paths in journalism and broadcasting. WNMU-FM offers student tours and Q&A sessions with station staff and various university departments, exposing students to diverse career options. WNMU-FM collaborates with the Upper Peninsula Children's Museum on the "8-18 Media" program, which produces three-minute news features on current topics and events, written and produced for an adult audience from a youth perspective. We partner with the Lake Superior Partnership and its Lake Superior Leadership Academy, a program focused on developing future leaders. WNMU hosts tours for 20-30 community leaders, showcasing station operations and facilitating Q&A sessions. "Learning Through the Seasons," a program for grandparents, parents, and caregivers of young children, providing engaging activities for lifelong learning, is now in its tenth year. Produced in partnership with Grandparents Teach Too, a non-profit organization founded by early elementary teachers, reading specialists, and early childhood education specialists, the program is based on their co-authored book. "Learning Through the Seasons" airs weekly during "All Things Considered" and "Weekend Edition" and is available as an online podcast. The program is produced in multiple languages and accessible worldwide, with eight years of archives available at WNMUFM.org. WNMU-FM staff work closely with Northern Michigan University professors to provide students with real-world experience in writing and program production, as well as on-the-job training in areas such as on-air board operation, student news reporting, field recording for news and music, traffic and operations, copywriting, web content and design, database management, volunteer recruitment, training and scheduling, and fundraising for public media. WNMU-FM regularly partners with the NMU Communications and Media Studies Department to provide students with live production experience through internships and employment, broadcasting live performances from various campus locations. WNMU-FM also partners with the NMU Music Department to record and present local music performances on "Peninsula Performances," hosted by music director Kurt Hauswirth. Since September 2020, Station Manager Tammy Wixtrom Johnson has served as staff advisor to WUPX-FM, the NMU student radio station, providing guidance on FCC compliance, internet streaming, budgeting, and overall station management. WNMU is fostering cross-learning opportunities between the two stations. Recently, WNMU assisted WUPX in upgrading its studio equipment to align with WNMU's standards, benefiting students seeking experience at both stations. WNMU-FM partners with the Michigan Public Radio Network (MPRN) to support two full-time reporters covering state capitol news in Lansing. MPRN member stations share local news content, enabling stations statewide to report on developments in various communities. MPRN is exploring enhancements to this service, including expanding into hard news video and feature content for all participating public radio and television stations in Michigan. The Michigan Association of Public Broadcasters is pursuing a CPB grant to research the needs of Michigan residents, aiming to improve the focus and delivery of MPRN. WNMU-FM partners with the United Way of Marquette County to promote support for regional non-profits, many of which serve children and low-income households. WNMU-FM also collaborates with the United Way to recruit volunteers during pledge drives.

3. What impact did your key initiatives and partnerships have in your community? Describe any known measurable impact, such as increased awareness, learning or understanding about particular issues. Describe indicators of success, such as connecting people to needed resources or strengthening conversational ties across diverse neighborhoods. Did a partner see an increase in requests for related resources? Please include direct feedback from a partner(s) or from a person(s) served.

WNMU-FM's initiatives have fostered stronger connections with the communities we serve by providing educational opportunities, engaging with local organizations, and amplifying diverse voices. WNMU-FM actively encourages community involvement by welcoming local organizations, schools, scouts, and senior and student programs for station tours and staff interactions. Through partnerships with regional school districts, WNMU-FM offers hands-on learning experiences, including high school internships in various disciplines. Additionally, WNMU-FM collaborates with elementary and middle schools in the local community to support career awareness initiatives. These efforts include guided station tours and Q&A sessions with staff and representatives from different university departments, providing students with insights into a variety of career pathways. Information about these tours is available on our website, on-air, and in our online monthly program guide. Our commitment to community engagement extends to cultural enrichment through partnerships with regional music festivals such as the Hiawatha Traditional Music Festival, Pine Mountain Music Festival, and Marquette Area Blues Festival. In addition to recording performances for later broadcast, WNMU-FM maintains an active presence at these events, fostering direct engagement with community members. A key initiative, Anishinaabe Radio News, now in its ninth year, is produced in collaboration with the Northern Michigan University's Center for Native American Studies. Hosted by April Lindala, this two-minute weekly segment airs during "Morning Edition" and "All Things Considered", providing historical and cultural insights while highlighting Indigenous events at NMU and across the Great Lakes Region. The segment's impact is measurable through online downloads, which indicate continued audience demand. Furthermore, multiple public radio stations across Michigan have requested to air this feature, reinforcing its significance for Native American communities. This initiative has also deepened our relationship with the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community, leading to discussions on expanding our services to better support Indigenous populations. Building on our commitment to Indigenous representation, WNMU-FM has partnered with Native Voice One to introduce "Gaënö'", a program showcasing contemporary music from Indigenous artists. In addition to entertainment, "Gaënö'" serves an educational role, introducing audiences to modern Native American music and featuring artist interviews. "Our Learning Through the Seasons" program, developed in partnership with "Grandparents Teach Too", continues to expand nationally and internationally. This initiative has been particularly impactful within correctional facilities, helping incarcerated individuals become more compassionate caregivers. The accompanying book has been republished in six languages, and we continue to receive requests from parents and grandparents for copies. WNMU-FM also collaborates with the Lake Superior Community Partnership's Lake Superior Leadership Academy, a program dedicated to developing future leaders. Each year, WNMU hosts 20–30 emerging leaders for station tours and presentations on public broadcasting's role in the community. Many attendees express surprise at how public broadcasting operates and appreciate learning about the collaboration between the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, Northern Michigan University, and station members in sustaining this vital community resource. During these sessions, staff demonstrate key operational components, including studio automation, live show preparation, and the Emergency Alert System's critical function from federal, state, and local levels. Through these initiatives, WNMU-FM continues to strengthen

community engagement, enhance cultural awareness, and provide valuable educational resources that serve diverse audiences across our region.

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4. Please describe any efforts (e.g. programming, production, engagement activities) you have made to investigate and/or meet the needs of minority and other diverse audiences (including, but not limited to, new immigrants, people for whom English is a second language and illiterate adults) during Fiscal Year 2024, and any plans you have made to meet the needs of these audiences during Fiscal Year 2025. If you regularly broadcast in a language other than English, please note the language broadcast.

WNMU-FM remains committed to serving diverse audiences through specialized programming, strategic partnerships, and digital engagement. Now in its 10th year, “Learning Through the Seasons” continues to provide valuable educational content for grandparents, parents, and caregivers of young children. Produced in collaboration with Grandparents Teach Too—a nonprofit founded by early childhood educators and literacy specialists—this program offers engaging activities designed to foster lifelong learning. “Learning Through the Seasons” airs weekly during “All Things Considered” and “Weekend Edition” and is also available as an online podcast. To enhance accessibility, the program is produced in multiple languages, with seven years of archived content available worldwide at WNMUFM.org. Since 2016, WNMU-FM has partnered with Northern Michigan University's Center for Native American Studies to produce “Anishinaabe Radio News”, hosted by April Lindala. This weekly two-minute segment, airing during “Morning Edition” and “All Things Considered”, explores Native American history and culture while providing updates on Indigenous events at NMU and throughout the Great Lakes region. Episodes are also published as weekly podcasts. The program has fostered meaningful dialogue with the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community, leading to ongoing discussions on how WNMU-FM can better serve Native American audiences through expanded programming. Community engagement is integral to WNMU-FM’s mission. With a small staff of six, we maximize our impact by partnering with local organizations to provide promotional support and volunteer assistance at their events. Each WNMU-FM staff member is personally involved with at least one community organization, strengthening our direct connections with listeners. These relationships offer valuable insights into community needs and help us assess our impact on diverse audiences. To expand our reach, WNMU-FM continues to enhance its digital engagement efforts through active social medai accounts and dedicated podcast offerings. Our mobile app, available for both Apple and Android devices, provides listeners with on-demand access to our programming. Additionally, we are leveraging analytics to better understand and serve our rural and minority audiences, ensuring that our digital expansion aligns with community needs. WNMU-FM collaborates with faculty from Northern Michigan University’s Communication and Media Studies Department, offering students hands-on experience in producing live broadcasts from various campus locations. These live performances air on WNMU-FM providing both educational opportunities for students and high-quality content for our listeners in the local community. Our programming lineup also includes “Concierto!”, a weekly classical music program presented in both Spanish and English. This show highlights compositions and performances by Latin American and Spanish musicians, broadening our cultural offerings. Additionally, WNMU has partnered with Native Voice One to introduce “Gaënö’”, a program showcasing contemporary music from Indigenous artists across various genres. This show not only entertains but also educates listeners about the modern Native American music scene through artist interviews and curated selections. Through these initiatives, WNMU-FM remains dedicated to amplifying diverse voices and meeting the needs of underrepresented communities across our listening area.

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5. Please assess the impact that your CPB funding had on your ability to serve your community. What were you able to do with your grant that you wouldn't be able to do if you didn't receive it?

Funding provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) is not merely helpful to WNMU-FM; it is essential for our operation and our ability to serve our rural and underserved community. The annual Community Service Grant (CSG) provides critical funding stability, especially given the fluctuations inherent in small/rural market revenue streams and the nationwide decline in membership numbers. Simply put, WNMU-FM could not operate without CPB funding. This funding is more vital than ever due to significant increases in programming fees, particularly from National Public Radio (NPR), with further increases anticipated. WNMU-FM is actively pursuing strategies to enhance long-term financial stability, including planned and legacy giving campaigns. However, the philanthropic landscape in our rural community presents unique challenges compared to larger markets. CPB grant funding is therefore crucial for our continued operations. While WNMU-FM strives for greater financial independence, any further reduction in CPB funding would severely compromise our ability to provide local service, let alone maintain current programming levels. As a small market station, our limited population base has historically constrained our fundraising capacity. However, the growing popularity of internet streaming and podcasting offers new opportunities for revenue generation. To adapt, we are intensifying our membership campaigns—focusing on increasing sustaining members and engaging the next generation of listeners. Nevertheless, operating in a small market necessitates careful fiscal management as we explore digital revenue streams and enhance existing fundraising initiatives. CPB funding plays a critical role in enabling WNMU-FM to produce local programming and deliver essential news services, including our statewide partnership with the Michigan Public Radio Network (MPRN). This collaboration, which connects public radio stations across Michigan, ensures that our rural listeners stay informed about developments at the state capital and beyond. However, the network operates on a tight budget, and without CPB support, WNMU-FM would be forced to withdraw from this vital partnership, limiting our community’s access to accurate, statewide news coverage. In response, MPRN and member stations are developing a long-term funding strategy to strengthen this collaboration and expand its offerings, including video content to enhance online news coverage. Since losing our 102.3 translator frequency in 2000, WNMU-FM has faced persistent challenges with on-air reception in Marquette, our primary city of license. Fortunately, the expansion of streaming services and the launch of our mobile app have allowed us to overcome this limitation, ensuring listeners can access our programming from any location. We continue to explore additional options to enhance our signal coverage in this key area. In 2003, drastic reductions in state funding for Michigan’s public colleges and universities forced NMU to implement broad budget cuts, including reduced support for WNMU-FM. Today, university funding accounts for only a portion of our operating budget, with the majority coming from listener contributions and from CPB grants. As operational costs continue to rise, CPB funding remains an indispensable component in keeping WNMU-FM on the air and ensuring we can continue serving our rural and underserved audiences. Some of which have no other media access due to limited broadband and cellular service in our remote region.

Comments

Question	Comment

No Comments for this section